



**Committee on  
Homeland Security Democrats**  
**Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member**

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**House Homeland Security Subcommittee Crafts Bipartisan Legislation that Would Keep  
Explosives Out of Terrorist Hands**

*Department of Homeland Security to Regulate Ammonium Nitrate-based Fertilizer under Legislation  
Introduced by  
Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) and Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA)*

WASHINGTON—Members of the House Committee on Homeland Security today voted unanimously to help block terrorists' access to ammonium nitrate fertilizer, which when combined with various fuels has been used to create improvised explosive devices that have claimed many victims.

This deadly combination was found in the device used by domestic terrorists Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. These devices also have been used internationally in several terrorist incidents.

The Subcommittee on Prevention of Nuclear and Biological Attack today heard testimony on the importance of regulating this potentially dangerous substance. The Subcommittee also marked up legislation introduced by the Committee's Ranking Member, Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), and Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA), the Committee's Vice Chairman.

The "Secure Handling of Ammonium Nitrate Act" gives the Department of Homeland Security the authority to regulate entities and individuals that produce, sell, or distribute ammonium nitrate-based fertilizer. This bill would allow the Department, working with the Department of Agriculture, to develop regulations to create a registry of those who handle ammonium nitrate-based fertilizer.

Only facilities and people registered with the Department would be able to legally access ammonium nitrate-based fertilizer. Anyone purchasing ammonium nitrate would be required to have a registration number. Retailers would be required to keep records of ammonium nitrate sales for at least three years. The records must include the purchaser's name, address, telephone number, registration number, and other valid State-

issued identification, the date of sale and quantity sold. Violators are subject to civil penalties of up to \$50,000.

Rep. Thompson stressed the importance of the Department of Homeland Security leading the effort to protect our nation's agricultural sector.

"Historically, agriculture has been the mainstay of the Mississippi economy, and farmers swear by ammonium nitrate-based fertilizer," said Rep. Thompson. "This substance must continue to be available for farming, and we also must make sure terrorists cannot easily acquire it and use it as a lethal weapon against the American people."

"I applaud Chairman Linder, Committee Vice-Chairman Weldon, and Ranking Member Thompson, and Rep. Langevin for their leadership on this issue," said Peter T. King, Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security. "They clearly understand the importance of our committee's mission, helping safeguard America against another terrorist attack; and this bill takes positive steps in that direction."

"This is a highly unusual situation, in that an industry has voluntarily approached Congress and asked to be regulated," said Weldon. "I applaud the fertilizer industry for their responsible approach to safeguarding the use of their product. Ammonium nitrate was used in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and today's bill would help prevent another tragedy like this from happening again."

"The risk that ammonium nitrate-based fertilizer, so critical to the agricultural operation of many of our nation's farmers, will be used by a terrorist in an improvised explosive device must be confronted and reduced," said Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI). "While some states should be commended for taking the initiative, I cannot help but think that the job of securing ammonium nitrate should be a federal concern."

The Fertilizer Institute believes the legislation, as introduced by Reps. Curt Weldon and Bennie Thompson, will effectively enhance the security measures the fertilizer industry has undertaken to help keep ammonium nitrate out of the hands of those who wish to harm our nation," said TFI President Ford B. West. "TFI thanks Chairman Linder for scheduling this important hearing on legislation to provide uniform, common sense security measures for agricultural professionals and farmers who use ammonium nitrate."

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